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ABSTRACT

On the assumption that there will be a national program of day care for preschool children, the author presents the major issues involved. An attempt is made to bring together some figures on current need and available facilities, to examine policy considerations in the implementation of programs, to present some difficulties in providing adequate caretakers, and to discuss preferred strategies in the mix of programs to meet the needs. Policy and program considerations include: (1) level (a custodial-to-developmental continuum), (2) eligibility, (3) types of services (part-time, full-time, day, night, drop-in, etc.), (4) control, (5) costs, and (6) personnel. The author concludes with recommendations based on three assumptions: (1) Most families can provide children with good care if there are programs, facilities and perscnnel to help them when needed; (2) It is desirable to strengthen rather than dilute family ties; and (3) Programs should be at the developmental level. The focus is on day care centers for preschocl children over three years old. Other arrangements for those under three years are discussed. (TL)

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DAY CARE: GOLD COIN OR BRASS CHECK

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DAY CARE: GOLD COIN OR BRASS CHECK

There are many clear indications that we will have a national program of day care for preschool children. The Executive branch of government has repeatedly emphasized the need for improving the quality of the first five years of life. The Legislative branch has been discussing various means of implementing programs dealing with early childhood. The Judiciary has recently thrown important backing to the trend to make appealing the provision for children away from their own homes by ruling in favor of paying more for such care than is paid to a mother for care in her own home of her own child. Professionals from many disciplines have been proliferating conferences, workshops, and reports. All of which leads one almost inevitably to the conclusion that a national program of day care for preschool children will come into being within the foreseeable future.

National programs have a habit of evoking mixed but intense reactions, especially when they are instituted quickly and unevenly. The enthusiasm for, and criticisms leveled at, the wide variety of programs under the batch-all name of Head Start is a recent example of such reactions brought about, to at least some extent, by the large gaps between the conception of a great idea and its implementation. It might be well, therefore, to have a "great debate" on some of the major issues before lines are hardened rather than after-the-fact breast beating and/or accusations. This paper is being written in the spirit of inquiry, but in the manner and passion of advocacy. An attempt will be made to bring together some figures on current need and available facilities, to examine some policy considerations in the implementation of programs, to present some difficulties in providing adequate caretakers, and to present some thoughts as to preferred strategies in the mix of programs to meet the needs.

EXTENT OF THE PROBLEM

Day care in its broadest sense refers to the provision of a service to children away from their usual residences on a daily rather than long term basis. The age range is generally from birth to about fourteen years, or junior high school age. This range presents too great a variety of problems and issues, and this paper will therefore be limited to consideration of day care for children of preschool age, living with one or both parents, and in non-specialized services in that they are set up to serve children without marked physical or other handicaps.

Approximately 22 million children under the age of six years are receiving care of some sort. Most of them are receiving the care of their own mothers and/or fathers in their own homes. They are thus, theoretically at least, not "at risk," although they constitute the total pool of children with whom we must be concerned. While the likelihood that high quality programs will be provided increases as the socio-economic status of the recipients of the service goes up, the cost of universal day care, even if limited to preschoolers, makes it likely that priorities will be set to provide day care for children in low income families. With this in mind we must examine carefully the factors affecting quality in any program that is proposed. The many political and social considerations involved in the issue of universality will not be discussed here.

Although available figures vary, it seems that there are about 4.5 million "disadvantaged" children in their preschool years. This figure appears to be consistent with the estimates of one-fifth of the nation living in poverty, and the association of poverty with large family size. Thus the policy and program issues considered need to apply to the range of

4.5 million to 22 million children. There are less than 650,000 places for children in licensed centers or in family day care,[7] and only a small proportion of the children of working mothers is in day care centers. Mere expansion programs of such facilities may not meet the needs for many years.

There is wide, though not universal, agreement that the provision of custodial care alone is an evil to be avoided. The developmental approach to child needs is viewed as desirable[5,7,12] and is an underlying assumption in this paper. Thus the standards of traditional "preschools," the nursery school and kindergarten, must be included in the concept of day care. But in examining the extent of the problem one notes that almost forty per cent of children eligible by age do not have kindergartens available to them, and more than ninety per cent of children so eligible for nursery school education do not have such facilities to serve them. A disproportionate number of the "disadvantaged" are included in those doing without.[16]

WHO WANTS DAY CARE

The list of those who want day care for preschool children is long. Motivations are varied, as are views of types of service that are needed. Working mothers want to be able to have their children cared for in such manner as will free them of worries while they are working. Not all working mothers are "disadvantaged," but all working mothers of preschoolers must make some provision for their care. It is anticipated that in ten years there will be about 37 million women working, or about double the number of twenty years ago, so the problem will increase nationally.[15] Not all of these working women will have preschoolers, but the proportion may increase during this decade when the greatest population growth will be in the 25-34 year old group.[15] Working mothers constitute a major consumer group of day care services.

Various professional and occupational groups, from nutrition, education, social work, medicine and psychology, and paraprofessionals allied to them, are the devisors and providers of the service. Each brings its own view of what is "most" important in the service and seeks allies from among the others to implement its own biases. None would concede, including city planners, architects, and economists, that his own contribution to the development of day care programs might be somehow peripheral. And since day care is about to become a growth industry, and professions want to have their expertise utilized to the maximum extent, the occupational groups involved want day care.

Government (or "society") in the current scene has the roles of major planner, policy setter, provider of funds, and adjudicator of differences. It seems clear that government is viewing day care as at least a partial or supplemental solution to manpower and welfare problems.[6,8] Provisions in the Family Assistance proposals by the Administration, and proposed amendments[14] under consideration by Congress give credence to this interpretation of governmental motivations and expectations. The writings and statements of people in the Department of HEW give added weight to this interpretation.[2,7,8] But whether motivations are "pure" or not, we may safely say that government ways day care.

Some proprietary groups have been buying talent and selling day care services, through franchise arrangements and other structures.[3] If "money is in day care" this year, we may expect growth in the number of such operations. And with our present Administration's emphasis on channeling services through the private sector to the extent possible,[13,18] the money will be there. So such proprietary groups want day care.

And finally, but by no means last in either intensity of conviction or importance, there is the Women's Liberation Movement. It is not being "put down" by being last, but is placed here in order to close the list as it was opened: by a group (like working mothers) with the purest of motivations that needs more than rhetoric and slogans from all of the others to achieve desirable ends. The Women's Lib wants day care.

One group is glaringly missing from this list: the children. They are the object of the service, the other major consumer group of day care services. To my knowledge there is no group, organized or unorganized, of preschoolers who are pressing demands. Could it be that they are telling us through their silence that they do not want day care?

WHO DEEDS DAY CARE

All children need day care of some kind at some time. All mothers of preschoolers need child care facilities of some kind at some time. A large variety of arrangements are currently made: from full-time live-in child nurses for those few families that can afford such a luxury; to family, friend, or neighbor who casually agrees to "look in on" a child in his mother's absence. The children at greatest risk, those that appear to have the greatest need for good child care facilities, are children who require protective services because their mothers have physical or mental, social or emotional problems that seriously endanger the well-being of the child. But whether day care is an appropriate service for these children is a moot question.

Child neglect and child abuse are well known phenomena that may lead to removal of the child from the home of his natural parents. But both of these problems may be lessened in frequency if there are means through which parents could have adequate day care that would remove the child as a

source of additional tensions, pressure, or responsibility for required periods during the day (or night) so that both the child and parent would be spared the malevolent effects of the presence of the other.

These, then, are the children of mothers who may need relief from the physical care of children for some period of the day or night because of valid health, emotional, or social reasons, and who, with the relief, can continue to maintain a home for the children. Other preschoolers may also need day care, but perhaps their need can best be seen in relation to the need of their mothers.

Preschoolers' mothers who want to work should be able to do so. If one accepts this basic premise it follows that such mothers need day care facilities, for without adequate provisions for care of their children the "right" to work becomes too costly--it is devoid of meaning. Preschoolers' mothers who want and have opportunity for job training or education on any level need day care facilities. (Any statement referring to "mothers" is equally applicable to "fathers.")

Certainly no profession, no movement, no branch of government, no proprietary group "needs" day care; they already have too many calls on their time, energies, and money to "need" day care. Those who do need day care, however, have a claim upon these resources, and a valid expectation that these other groups will provide whatever is required to meet this need.

ON WHOM MAY DAY CARE BE THRUST

Day care's time has come. Many groups are calling for it. There is a sometimes not very subtle pressure to accept day care outside of the home as the desirable solution to many problems. Those who may not accept it as a

idea for themselves require strength of conviction, power, organization, "clout," money, and influence if they hope to stand out against the trend. Low income families feel pressures from our work ethic to accept the rightness of preschoolers' mothers working, and those among them who receive public financial assistance feel pressure from the inadequacy of their grants to "get off Welfare." Families in or near poverty are lacking not only in money, but also in the characteristics required to swim against the tide. There is a danger that day care may be thrust on mothers of preschool children in low income families--mothers who might prefer to raise their own children in their own homes. While it is true that provisions will probably be put into laws and regulations to "insure" against this outcome, the pressure for creation of a larger labor pool of low income workers and the pressure to substitute "workfare" for "welfare" could easily subvert the intended safeguards and deprive many people, solely on the basis of their poverty, of any meaningful choice.

POLICY AND PROGRAM CONSIDERATIONS

Before going further, let us turn to some policy and program considerations. Day care is seen as one way of solving a problem, to at least some extent. Since no problem of this size can be solved by sloganeering or simplistic approaches, the central question becomes one that asks: Under what conditions do alternate plans work better, at less cost, etc., etc. Space does not permit an extensive examination of all factors going into these policy decisions. But mention must be made of some.

Level

As mentioned earlier, a decision must be made that the policy to be carried out in day care programs is one of individualization of children's needs through a developmental approach. All programs should have an ap-

proach on this level, whether it involves a broad spectrum of services such as nutrition, health, education, socialization, etc., or emphasizes a single service, such as cognitive development. An example of a broadly conceptualized developmental approach is Head Start; a somewhat more narrow, but still developmental approach is a well staffed nursery school.

There may be some confusion if the differences between day care and preschool education are exaggerated. If day care is to be developmental it must include preschool education. The content of program in a day care center may add components such as health care, nutrition, etc., but nursery school and kindergarten methods and procedures geared toward enhancing children's social, emotional, and cognitive development cannot be omitted. If they are, the level of the child care center is cutodial in fact if not in name.

It would be possible to establish day care programs much more quickly and inexpensively if the policy decision favors the custodial approach. Of course no program will now be called custodial. The key to determination of level will be the quality of personnel to whom we entrust the care of our most precious national resource. There is a continuum from the worst of custodial to the best of developmental, and in 1971 it is unlikely that the nation will opt for either extreme. But the decision as to the level along this continuum at which the policy will be geared will have to be made.

Who will be eligible

Neither now nor in the foreseeable future will provisions be made for day care of 22 million children. A more modest beginning is likely, and a decision will be made as to what segment of the population is to receive this service through government funds. The criteria could rest on family income, age of child, determination of child's or parents' need regardless of income,

or any combination of these or other factors. The decision regarding eligibility will affect speed of implementation, quality of program, type of personnel and training programs. Many differences in program will develop if eligibility is determined by age of child or family income, or both--but a decision on this question will have to be made.

Types of day care services

There are conditions under which centers are most desirable to care all day for children whose mothers are working or being brained. Justification for such centers should rest firmly on a decision, based on evidence, that such a facility is in the best interests of the child and the mother. A crucial factor in this determination will have to be the lower age limit of children to be thus cared for. Perhaps a good rule of thumb might be that the younger the child, the greater the proof required that this is a desirable setting.

Part-day programs may be most desirable for those children who are enrolled in nursery schools or kindergartens and who need additional services such as health or nutrition, or whose mothers need additional time for day care of their children because of work, or perhaps need respite from one child to care adequately for another at home at the time.

Not all people work an 8 to 4 shift, so day care may in fact have to include nighttime hours, as well as being open as a facility for seven days a week. Full use of physical plant and equipment may make this economical.

Family group day care and family foster day care may be the most readily expandable programs, for they do not require building or remodelling facilities. The name "family day care" may be misleading. Current practice usually does not include a complete, warm, pompetent family taking loving care of children of other parents. Rather there is frequently a woman taking poor

custodial care of, or babysitting with, a number of children in her own, usually inadequate home. Rather than going into the new-name business here, however, the appellation "family day care" will be retained to indicate an ideal to be sought rather than a reality achieved. This type of day care may present problems of selection, training, and maintenance of standards. If these problems can be overcome, such day care brings with it some advantage of flexibility. In addition, it may provide many women with an interesting and rewarding occupation that has much social utility. But a truly developmental family day care system, either group or foster, may be difficult to achieve.

"Drop in" care for brief periods when mothers have to perform the many other tasks that are required of them, such as shopping, may be provided. The "developmental" nature of such facilities could be minimal, but their existence alone would make easier developmental provisions in other settings. Specialized facilities might be strategically placed in shopping centers where mothers can get groceries, do their laundry, transact their business with the cobbler, and get their prescriptions filled. Such provisions may well save a number of children from the hazards of fire or asphxiation when Mom "runs out for a minute" to attend to such tasks, and thus might be considered protective. Decisions regarding location, priority to be given to this type of service, funding, and eligibility for use would be required.

While not "day care" in the traditional sense, services of trained homemakers and "sitters" to meet developmental needs of children whose mothers are temporarily ill or otherwise incapacitated could be added to the list of programs needed for protection against the hazards inherent in such situations. One might validly consider this a day care service brought

to the consumer. Decisions would be required as to eligibility, children's age limits, or other conditions under which such services would be available.

Auspices and control

The auspices and control of day care facilities and personnel will have an impact on the quality of care, its level, organization, and acceptability to the consumers. If day care is under the control of government, which is likely in the current scene, its placement within the jurisdiction of our State or local welfare systems may well limit its acceptability, effectiveness and utilization. An analogous situation occurred when the decision was made by New York State (and others) to put its Medicaid program under Welfare rather than Health, thus shifting the major focus from the delivery of health service of good quality to the determination of eligibility to receive a service. This kind of restrictive administration of an essentially expansive idea might be avoided. Publicly financed programs might best fall under the aegis of State Offices of Child Development. Close cooperation with State Health and Education departments could be built into their charge, and quality control of locally administered programs could be overseen using criteria most important to the two major consumer groups of day care. Children need advocates, but one would hope that content and form of day care do not become casualties in a battle among various community and political factions for control of programs.

Costs

Any program of day care that is developmental in its intent is bound to cost considerably more than one that is custodial. With a national commitment to the development of children, an assumption in this paper is that the nation will opt for development. There are thus the decisions to be made as

to quality (for costs rise with any rise in quality) and as to who bears the costs. Should there be fees attached to the services? Should programs be governmental, voluntary, propriatary, or some mix of these? Proprietary programs become important because of the relationship to cost and quality, for if profit is added to cost, the same amount of money may buy less quality of service, particularly in personnel. While this is not necessarily true, its likelihood should be taken into account in making the decisions regarding the middle-man between the provider of funds and the consumer of service.

A quick approximation of potential costs might be in order here. Assuming 4 million children under six in families of low income, with half of them three to five and the other half less than three years old, an estimate could be made for full-day center care for the older children, and full-day family day care (taking heed of the doubts expressed above) for the younger children. Estimates made by the Day Care and Child Development Council of America, Inc. for "acceptable" care are $1,862 per year per child in center care, and $2,032 per year per child in foster day care.[1] Thus two million children in each type of care at this "acceptable" level would cost $3.724 billion for the older children and $4.064 billion for the younger children. If one took the somewhat higher estimates of $2,320 and $2,372 for center and foster day care considered "desirable," the figures become $4.64 billion and $4.744 billion respectively. Fortunately not all children, even in low income families, require full-day programs away from their own homes. But with even half of the potential consumers we are still talking about a figure on the order of $4 billion per year. Policy makers would, of course, want to consider alternative programs that are both less costly and more desirable (particularly for the younger children) that involve the care of children in their own homes by their own mothers.

Personnel

One of the greatest limitations to the immediate implementation of a national day care program for children in low income families is the availability of personnel. There are all too few nursery school and kindergarten teachers, trained day care and child development professionals, and child care nonprofessionals qualified by training and using criteria of liking for children, dependability, emotional control, good health, cleanliness, resourcefulness, and patience. Miller estimates that with regard to early childhood educational personnel alone, excluding ancillary service staffs, the deficit is close to 300,000. Using figures from Head Start in 1967 he states that almost one third of professional staff had less than two full years of college work, nearly 80% had practically no experience in preschool education, and even more had little or no experience with children living in poverty.[11] A commitment to developmental day care would have implications for both manpower policies and training facilities, for we should keep before us always the criterion of quality of personnel in evaluating proposals and programs.

CONCLUSIONS

Stating issues and problems is a beginning, but it should lead to possible solutions. The recommendations that follow are based on three assumptions: that most families can provide children with good care if there are programs, facilities, and personnel available to help when needed; that it is desirable to strengthen rather than dilute family ties; and that any day care program or mix of programs should be at the developmental level. With these assumptions in mind let us move to the recommendations themselves.

No mix of programs to meet the needs described above will come into full flower at one time. This implies that priorities have to be set, and

that a rationale for these priorities be made explicit. What follows are some details of program types and a sequence in which they might be introduced so as to achieve the goals of child care. A primary principle, whose justification will become clear as the sequence unfolds, is that day care centers should not be established for children younger than three years. Instead, the developmental goals can best be achieved through flexible use of day care services, with the third birthday being the dividing line between delivering service to the home, and bringing the child to the service. Let us start with the older children first, those from three to five.

There must be overlapping in programs for this age group, for there is little difference between developmental programs in child care centers and the more traditional preschool settings of kindergarten and nursery school. The primary difference is the number of hours of the program each day, with the kindergarten and nursery schools offering programs of shorter duration. In addition, a variety of services such as medical, dental, nutritional, and others may be housed in the same building or cluster as is the day care center. Perhaps such centers could be the core of neighborhood service centers that cover the whole range of services required by all residents in the community.

The large proportion of low income children not covered by existing kindergarten and nursery school facilities, together with the shortage of preschool teachers, trained aides, and other necessary personnel, might make this kind of "part-time day care program" a crucial point of entry to the problem of day care in general. Housing kindergarten and nursery school programs and their personnel within the centers that must be built would serve at least two purposes: better utilization of scarce facilities and equipment; and the powerful introduction of the developmental approach to

child care that has characterized early childhood education. A major effort needs to be made immediately to train preschool teachers and aides, with the rapid expansion of training facilities and recruitment. The magnitude of this task[11] brooks no delay.

Day care centers, open day and night, and available to all children between the ages of three and five who are members of low income families would have to be built, staffed, and equipped. Extensive building and training programs are required if we are to reach the target population. Only the building and training programs can be started quickly. It would seem well for the service programs in day care centers to be phased in only when buildings have been built, and adequately screened and trained personnel are available. This will take time. In the meantime a stop-gap measure that does not require building could be utilized: so-called "family day care."

There are some programs of family day care in operation. Despite the limitations and the difficulties of quality control mentioned earlier, they should continue to be built up for the present with four aims in mind: 1) to add places for three to five year olds while day care centers are being built, equipped, and staffed; 2) to train women who are in the family day care program so that they may be available for day care centers and other experimental programs when they are developed; 3) to improve the quality of of what is now available to the children and their mothers, most of whom are using very informal day care arrangements of uneven quality; and 4) to provide opportunities for screening to select the most gifted caretakers for possible future use with high risk children. Family day care programs should be phased out as the day care centers become activated, to be rebuilt only for special needs and with the best of caretakers trained in day care centers.

In sum, day care should be available for children from three to five from low income families in centers as they become available, and in family day care as a stop-gap measure. Support for either or both types of programs should be contingent on their meeting developmental standards of child care. Eligibility for these services could well rest on residence in designated low income areas, much as was done with Head Start. This program itself could easily be included within the centers when they are operational. While it is desirable that such centers be available to all without regard to income, for the benefits that the children of this age would derive from them, their expansion should proceed only after quality has been attained for those of low income, those without the resources required to make other arrangements possible.

Turning now to the younger children, those below the age of three, let us develop the rationale for the principle that day care centers should not be established. The earliest years are those in which the basis for future development is laid. Then the bonds of relationship within the family are tied, parent-child bonds are secured, and families are strengthened through mutual interchange and responsibility. Infants are most vulnerable to the lack of stability of relationships. A theme that runs through the literature dealing with child care by other than the mother and/or father is the problem of separation anxiety. Easing the way into day care, handling the difficulties for both mother and child, repairing the damage that is done, even with the best of intentions--these concerns occupy a high spot in the thinking of child care, child development, and child guidance personnel. While the problem of separation anxiety does not end at three, the younger child has by far the more difficult time in dealing with it. Instead of easing,

handling, and repairing, the course of wisdom may be not to separate the infant from the parent--to prevent rather than to cure.

Because of the vulnerability of infants no family day care program should be initiated for them. It is hardest to control, to oversee, to enforce standards in this type of care. Only after there has been a program of family day care for older children in existance for some years, and the training and screening mentioned earlier in relation to such programs has taken place, can there be any likelihood that family day care for many infants could have the developmental methods and techniques to which we should be committed.

While care for infants has been institutionalized in other countries, primarily in the form of day care centers, this has been done for reasons other than the best interests of the infant. Rather, economic necessity for the development of the country which needs all possible productive labor, is a major motivation. This is the situation in much of eastern Europe . Hungary views day care for children under three as an economic necessity to be terminated as soon as possible. East Germany minimizes the economic motive by emphasizing equal opportunity for women. Czechoslovakia has stopped construction of day care facilities for children under the age of one year. The Israeli kibbutzim have both economic and defense reasons for their type of child care. Kibbutz child care cannot be generalized even in their own country since only about three per cent of the population of Israel live on kibbutzim. Even after many years of development the French creches for children from two months to three years (more than 180 in Paris alone) have long waiting lists, for their existence arose from the necessity in lower socioeconomic status families for both parents to work full time.[10] Each society models its day care facilities and programs for particular goals.

The Soviet Union and China are frankly political as well as being educational and developmental in their day care. And they tend to tie facilities to places of work.[17] The fact that programs in other countries are developmental is an attempt to make the best of a situation not necessarily deemed to be the best one for the children.

But what provision should be made for children in these tender years? Our greatest concern should be for those infants at greatest risk of severe developmental, physical, or emotional damage. If the risk to which the infant is exposed is of such great magnitude a full-time foster placement away from the home may be indicated. A risk of such proportions does not disappear "after hours," and a child in such a situation must be protected. A voluntary placement might be encouraged through casework counseling; but if this result is not achieved in good time, placement through court action may be indicated. Questions regarding availability and training of high quality foster homes and personnel are (fortunately) beyond the scope of this paper.

For infants at lesser risk, demanding less drastic action, there could be other types of programs in their own homes. Home programs, perhaps under the aegis of day care centers or other agencies with developmental programs available, could be instituted, providing supports for parents who need surcease from the constant pressures of child care. We recognize the need of day care center staffs to have breaks in their work day, to work reasonable hours, so that they may better respond warmly to the children in their care. Supports in the home (would circuit riding baby sitters be too far out?) could diminish tensions and help parents too to respond more warmly to their own children. Homemakers could add to the armamentarium of day care services brought to the infant. "Drop in" centers could also minimize risks to these infants.

Mention may be made of another group of infants at risk. These are the children of teen age mothers who have not completed their junior high or high school education. The trend has been to focus on the mothers' need for education and job training.[4] Infant centers have been developed to make this possible; or perhaps this has been a means of getting care for the infants, using the mothers' need as a justification. If education of the mother is indeed the primary concern we might look to another approach. Most jurisdictions require home tutoring for those who are required to attend school on the basis of their age if the student is ill for a protracted time or has an incapacitating condition. Though cyesis and motherhood are not illnesses, young teen age girls who fit these categories might have such home tutoring extended to them. This would, of course, be in addition to the other supports mentioned above for children at risk who can remain in their own homes. The mothers' need for being with others in similar situations could be met through freeing her, using home help, for some period of time each week. In any event, the principles determined by degree of risk to the infant should guide the type of program made available rather than turning this principle upside down in order to keep girls in school.

To this point we have discussed only infants at some degree of risk. What programs might be made available to infants inlow income families where risk is not a critical factor? A preventive approach would be appropriate here, for these infants have developmental needs that are not usually met in low income homes. All the ancillary services in neighborhood service centers or day care centers should be exportable, where necessary, to the home. Health, nutrition, dental, and other services should be available on an as-needed basis. But there are other programs that enhance the affective and cognitive development that is placed in jeopardy by poverty.

There have been both center-based and home-based programs of this type. Even if both of these program sites led to similar results, the latter appears to be more desirable to implement the policy of strengthening family life rather than diluting it. Home based programs have the added advantages of providing entree to help with a wide range of problems in family living, and of involving fathers as well as mothers in the process--a desired result that has been very hard to achieve in programs based away from home.

The cost of home based programs can be markedly less than others if costs of personnel and materials only are compared, thus eliminating the factor of additional services being available at day care centers. The cost per year per child is about half in home based programs of high quality, even if one excludes from consideration the building costs for centers.

These recommendations may not appeal to those who would not be eligible under the priority for low income families. Nor may women who want day care facilities for their preschoolers solely so that they might work like them. While availability of universal day care for preschoolers may be a desideratum, this should wait until the programs discussed above are in operation. Then the criterion of universality might have a higher priority.

CAVEATS

A mix of programs for preschoolers such as the one outlined above will be difficult to achieve. There are so many problems involved in setting up and running such programs that anything we can do to avoid being sidetracked from our goal will add to the store of energy and thought we can devote to these tasks. To this end, the following caveats seem in order:

1. The United States is a highly industrialized country, with much emphasis on mass production not only of goods but also of services. There may be a tendency in such a society to move toward group care rather than

individualization and the enhancement of individual relationships. Murphy notes that "children from...unfavorable backgrounds...need much more individual attention from the teacher...."[12,95] Individualization can, of course, take place in group settings, but we must beware the tendency automatically to see groups as the only, or even preferred setting in which individualization can take place.

2. There is a tendency among professionals, perhaps especially those in the helping fields, to view parents of children for whom they have some responsibility as being inept or interfering, and to have the sometimes not so secret thought that the children would do fine if only they (rather than the parents) could practice their magic. Whatever day care programs evolve should have a sign over the door for all employees to see: "We complement the family -- we do not substitute for it!"

3. We need developmental day care programs, in some situation, desperately. Let us have day care programs because they are a good in themselves, as aids to the development of children and families. We should avoid day care policies and programs that tend to weaken the family while they strengthen other programs, such as manpower or welfare.

4. If day care facilities are set up through contracts with entrepreneurs[13,18] it may be well to keep in mind that programs with the same cost may provide less service or service of lesser quality so that a profit may be derived from the operation.

5. We can learn from the experiences of other countries, but there are dangers in trying to apply their experiences in our own country with its very different culture, standards, and expectations. It has become popular to advocate kibbutzim in America. How difficult it would be to apply this experience developed in a rural, frontier situation, to our

urban, industrialized society. And the creches of France have spent years in developing well trained directors and specially trained caretakers. There may be merit in both of these settings for us. We must sift from the best rather than try to use whole programs from other countries.

6. We must not underestimate the importance of caretakers and the need for training if we mean to establish developmental programs. Unlike the French, Czechs, Israelis, etc., we have placed a very low valuation on the services of caretakers. The value placed on child caretakers here, whether in residential care, family group care, family day care, or foster care, can only be measured by what our society has paid them. By any measure--wages, salaries, working conditions, prestige, living quarters, etc.--we show that we will not make these essential tasks into attractive occupations. Day care personnel have frequently come from among economically, educationally, and emotionally deprived groups. People with these handicaps to overcome may have less to contribute to the care of children than would those without these handicaps. We need to screen, train, and pay caretakers in such ways as will make this occupation attractive and rewarding.

In conclusion, then, one may be justifiably concerned lest our society, with its strong emphasis on efficient administration and its demonstrated devaluation of day care and other child care personnel, move toward the <u>form</u> of developmental day care and the <u>content</u> of custodial care for the children.

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